

Mass Shootings in the U.S.—Why Are they Happening so Often?

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Abstract: Today we see mass shooting news in the U.S. almost every day. Why? This paper revises the first proposal on what types of family backgrounds have produced mass murderers in the past. Based on the revision, we would like to discuss which family environment types are the most responsible for today's mass shootings, and why we have more such types in the U.S. today.

Keywords: mass shootings, mass murder, family environment, childhood background, cause, America, gun control.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2015, Abe presented a paper entitled *Nine Types of Childhood Environments that Actually Produced Mass Murderers Based on the Information in Lay Literature and on the Internet* [1]. In his paper, he introduced nine different types of family environments that neglected the children's ego development. After this first proposal was submitted, several years passed, during which time more information became available as more incidents happened, against which this proposal could be tested. As with all other fields of science, he judged that some improvements and adjustments needed to be made from his initial proposal. Below is the revised version of *Neglectful* family environment types that produced mass murderers. The original thesis maintains that mass murders happen by the *Neglect* that annihilates, stops, hinders, and obstructs the subject's ego development, and never by the *Abuse* for *Serial Murders*, which distorts the subject's normal ego development. Based on this revised version, we would like to discuss why so many mass shootings have come to occur everywhere in the U.S. today.

Note 1. *The information used in this preliminary research was based on what could be obtained from lay literature on true crimes and internet sites such as Wikipedia, radford.edu, YouTube, etc., which contain as much inside information as can be considered helpful in knowing exactly what happened during the early lives of the subjects (some information is based on personal interviews and letter correspondences).*

Note 2. *M= mother, F= father, GM=grandmother, GF=grandfather, GP=grandparents, ▼= Unnatural Offensive Forces, Φ= Neglect, ab=abuse, ng=neglect, Italics*=Japanese Serial Killer*

II. LIST 1—NINE TYPES OF CHILDHOOD BACKGROUNDS THAT PRODUCED MASS MURDERERS—[REVISED]

Type 1 *Left alone due to parent's indifference/financial reasons/self-interest/death(s), or the subject being passed around or placed in an orphanage*

► Childhood neglect is the major cause of mass murder, which deprives the subject of the opportunities to learn communication skills and to develop his ego, which are essential for integrating into society.

◇ **Ronald Simmons**—F died at [3], and the same year M remarried a civil engineer for the Marine Corps with frequent transfers during childhood [2].

◇ **Joseph Wesbecker**—F died when he was 13 months old. He was passed around by her 16-year-old M, and one time deposited at orphanage [3]–[5].

Type 2 *Intentionally left out as the family scapegoat*

➡ Even when the subject is scapegoated in the family, the core nature of the family environment is *Neglect* and intentional *Discrimination* (which might produce anger consequently), but not offensive *Abuse* in the case of serial murders.

- ✧ **One Goh**—Left alone in South Korea after the rest of his family members moved to the U.S. [6].
- ✧ **James Ruppert**—M wanted a girl while F didn't care about children [7].
- ✧ **Eric Borel**—After his parents' divorce, Eric was sent to live with his F's parents until [5], during which time M visited only occasionally. Authoritarian religious M thought of him as a "child of sin." Eric had repeated rows with his step F ➡ Later became highly interested in Nazism [8].
- ✧ **Andrew Kehoe**—M passed away and F remarried. Kehoe didn't get along well with his step M, with whom he had constant arguments. When step M caught fire at his [14], Kehoe watched her burn for a few minutes before putting it out [9].
- ✧ **Julian Knight**—Being the eldest of three, he was adopted at [10] by an army-tied family, who frequently moved, and his parents divorced at his [12]. ➡ Started to be interested in guns and Nazis [10].
- ✧ **Ryuichi Iwasaki***—Attacked 19 people at a bus stop for elementary school students, killed one adult and one student, seriously injured three students. The school was attended by his two cousins with whom he grew up. Completely abandoned by his parents after their divorce, he lived at his uncle's, treated differently from his uncle's children [11].
- ✧ **Ichiro Kojima***—Attacked passengers in a bullet train cabin, killing one and stabbing two. After five years of intentional neglect, sometimes being locked in a bird shed, he was placed at a foster home and removed from the family register [12].

Type 3 *No normal family communication due to cold relationship or parents' idiosyncratic personalities*

➡ No communication among family members

- ✧ **James Holmes**—F was a mathematician/scientist with degrees from UC Berkeley and Stanford while M was a registered nurse. He grew up to be highly introverted, giving no response to neighbors' greetings [13].
- ✧ **Seung-Hui Cho**—F was reticent by nature. He emigrated from South Korea to the U.S. at [8]. His parents worked long hours as dry-cleaners seven days a week. There were no exchanges when M dropped him off at school [14] [15].
- ✧ **Richard Farley**—He was left playing alone with toys as the oldest of six. F was reticent by nature while M was not concerned much for him (*from letter*).
- ✧ **Eric Houston**—There was no communication among family members, who were after their own self-interests (*from letter*).

Type 4 *Inflexible/rigid parent(s) with a strong sense of duty/mission or highly religious (Revenge)*

➡ Parent(s) stuck in a direction other than for their own child. The child absorbs such a parent's attitude unconsciously. He often respects such a parent's attitude while feeling sad and lonely for not being paid attention to himself.

- ✧ **Baruch Goldstein**—He was born to an orthodox Jewish family, who were strongly against Islam [16].
- ✧ **Nidal Hasan**—He had diligent Muslim parents who worked long hours for their family restaurant. He gradually came to oppose the U.S. Armed Forces, which he worked for, for attacking fellow Muslims (*from letter*).

- ✧ **James Huberty**—He contracted polio at ^[3](which left him with a walking difficulty). His devoutly religious M abandoned the family for street preaching. His victims were predominantly Mexican/Mexican American. He was unable to find employment in Tijuana, where his family was relocated. He was ill-tempered and highly paranoid [17].
- ✧ **Takeshi Koizumi***—His F worked long hours for his shop in addition to being a traffic safety volunteer for school kids seven days a week. F placed the family dog Takeshi into a shelter for frequently barking at his customers while Takeshi was still at his elementary school (from letter) [18].

Type 5 *No postnatal physical intimacy due to mother's peculiar personality or mental problems*

➡ No postnatal kinship can give a person an inorganic machine-like personality. They tend to develop a strong obsession with something specific in place of human love/communication. In the case of serial killers, no postnatal kinship is followed by substantial abusive factors while, in the case of mass murderers, they do not have such substantial abusive factors.

- ✧ **Martin Bryant** [19].
- ✧ **Anders Breivik**—He had a peculiar smile as a boy. After his M and F (diplomat), divorced at his ^[1], his M, who had a borderline disorder, sexualized/physically abused him while frequently wishing him dead at his ^[4]. He went under cosmetic surgery. While working as customer service representative, he was double-faced, secretly hating Arab or South Asians and becoming racist. He was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. ➡He later became a Nazi while incarcerated [20] [21].
- ✧ **Howard Unruh** [22].
- ✧ **Adam Lanza** [23]
- ✧ **Dylan Klebold** [24].

Type 6 *Cannot express true feelings under highly demanding parent or insecure/fragile family conditions*

➡ Parent(s) either put high expectations on the subject to be successful or are at risk of getting divorced. Even in the case of high expectations, as long as the subject can meet them, such expectations and high pressures have an affinity to the subject, who kills their own ego and tries his best to accept their parents' value. This is different from offensive Abuse in the case of serial killers. In the case of insecure/fragile family conditions, the subject also kills their own ego and plays the role of the ideal child, trying to ameliorate and not to deteriorate the already critical situation.

- ✧ **Timothy McVeigh**—Although he was outgoing and playful as a child, because of family discord, he became shy and withdrawn. He was later bullied at school, taking refuge in a fantasy world of taking revenge. His M often left home only to return after a while. In 1984, when Timothy was ^[16] years old, his parents finally divorced. ➡He was into *White Power*. His act was to inflict revenge against the government for the Waco Seize [25].
- ✧ **Charles Whitman**—He grew up under a highly demanding, disciplinarian authoritarian F, who was self-made from an orphanage himself. His F frequently used violence toward M [26] [27].
- ✧ **Jacob Roberts**—After M died of cancer, he had to live with his aunt, who allegedly cared for only his inheritance [28].
- ✧ **Mark Lepine**—He was raised under an unstable and violent family condition. His F was an authoritarian into domestic violence and despised women. His parents finally divorced at his ^[7], after which his M left the children with other families to take courses for an advanced nurse career. His F stopped contacting the children and sending child support after the divorce. Lepine could see his M only on weekends. His action was a hate crime against women [29] [30].
- ✧ **Eric Harris**—He was raised under parents who cared only about their exterior and with whom he could not communicate his true feelings. His parents avoided facing his problems [31].

- ✧ **George Hennard**—His parents did not care about him. His family moved around frequently. His F was the commander of an Army base hospital. The children avoided the living room for fear of dirtying it, as it was their M's little showcase. George was mostly unnoticed through high school. He complained that women living in two neighboring towns were vipers. He had been a merchant mariner but was fired for drug buse [32] [33].

Note. "Cannot express true feelings under highly demanding parent "is different from one of the serial killer's backgrounds of "Dominating, controlling, and/or sexually oppressive mother." The pressure is much higher in serial killer's case, so that the anger/frustration has to be periodically released to maintain daily normal functions. In mass murderer's case, they cower and accept the authority, so that they become dispirited and passively obey the instructed directions without their own thinking.

Type 7 *Overprotective mother*

➤ Overprotection also takes away chances to develop the ego and social skills to become independent.

- ✧ **Michael Ryan**—His F being 55, Michael was mommy's boy. His M was a dinner lady at a local restaurant and doted on him. He continued to live with her after his F passed away, being a bachelor and with no child until the incident happened at [27]. [34]

Type 8 *Drug-induced psychosis*

➤ Especially those raised fragile under **Type 6** in highly demanding or unstable family conditions often become obsessed with certain delusional ideas partly to reinforce their weak selves under the influence of hallucinatory drugs. In the case of serial killers who use hallucinatory drugs, the subjects are placed under extremely high suppression or stress by both parents, which leads to the subject's anger toward parents or people outside. In the case of mass murderers, the subjects are placed under high demands and expectations or fear of family separation, in which they cannot show their true selves and develop self-blame or self-denial.

- ✧ **Jared Loughner**—He was raised in a very private family. His F, a retired truck driver, yelled at Jared over minor things. He was allegedly into conspiracy theories. **Type 6** + marijuana, LSD, etc. = developed paranoid schizophrenia [35].
- ✧ **Satoshi Uematsu***—He was raised under a highly demanding authoritarian father, who pressed him to be somebody in society. **Type 6** +synthetic herbs, marijuana = diagnosis (cannabis psychosis/delusional disorder/drug-induced psychotic disorder) [36] [37].

Type 9 *Highly intoxicated secondary psychopath**

➤ Those who have repeated antisocial acts and (petty) crimes snap once and for all due to high intoxication. Though they feel guilt while repeating such acts/crimes, high intoxication pushes subjects to cross the line. After high intoxication, some return to their original antisocial personalities while others do not come back from the drug-induced irrational psychological state.

- ✧ **Richard Speck**—He lost his loving F at [6] and had trouble learning due to dyslexia. He started to drink at [12] and dropped out of school at [16]. High on alcohol and drugs, he repeated minor offenses for years. He tortured, raped, and murdered eight nursing students at a dormitory. His initial death sentence was overturned to a life sentence due to jury selection issues [38].

- ✧ **George Banks**—Due to his mixed-race background, George experienced continuous bully/racism all through his life. He was imprisoned for eight years for a tavern robbery. Eight years after release, he took gin and prescription drugs the night before he killed 13 people, including seven children—five his own—their mothers, some of their relatives, and one bystander. Though sentenced to death, he still sits on death row due to being psychotic, delusional, and irrational [39] [40].

General Note

1. Many mass murderers are ready to commit suicide, be killed by the police, or be arrested after their acts, unlike serial killers, who want to run away and continuously commit murders. However, those who kill family members where there is no other witness (*Family Annihilator*) often run away and live as if nothing had happened [41].
2. In mass murder cases, even when the subjects point out external causes, such as abuse or bullying, they are often not as substantive as those in serial murder cases and are due to their more sensitive paranoid psychology.
3. The mixture of psychopathic characteristics (ego-centrism, callousness, deviousness, and anti-sociality) and normal characteristics (high levels of anxiety and depression) are called *Secondary Psychopathy*. A secondary psychopath can get out of control when heavily intoxicated temporarily by alcohol and drug use due to daily stress [42].
4. Though serial murders are in general committed for the pursuit of pleasure or satisfaction, mass murders are committed for revenge, either on direct or indirect (proxy) targets [43].
5. Though mass murderers' backgrounds are categorized into the above nine types of ego-development neglect, they also seem to be divided largely into a *Suicide-Attack* group and an *Ideology* group. While the former seems to come from a more pure neglect-type environment, the latter seems to be due to (1) authoritarian parenting, (2) parent's rigid lifestyle/creed imprinted, (3) parent's love manipulation, or (4) the subject's negative encounter(s) with people of a specific group. In (1), the subject docilely absorbs the parent's philosophy or conversely develops a certain solid ideology to fight against such authoritarian demands. In (2), the parent's creeds/way of life unconsciously permeates the subject, whether they like it or not. In (3), the subject needs to develop a solid ideology to survive unreliable parent(s) whose love is conditional. In (4), the subject has experienced a negative encounter(s) with people of a certain group and developed a negative image of that whole group. In other words, those who have killed based on a certain dogmatic ideology also seem to have been under some pressure not quite as severe and hostile as abuse in serial murder cases. Though the pure suicide-attack type very often can be into gears or images of aggression such as guns, knives, warfare, etc., they do not seem to depend on systematic teachings or dogmas to back them up theoretically such as religious fundamentalism, radical racism, Satanism, etc.

III. RECENT MASS SHOOTINGS

The below list displays mass shootings that have happened most recently.

Table 1: List of Mass Shootings that Happened in 2019—2020

**Note. Surface cause (→possible deep down cause)*

| Date | Description | Dead (Injured) | Cause |
|-------------------|---|----------------|--|
| January 17, 2020 | Shooting of Haynie family: A teenager fired at his family. Four were killed and one was injured. | 4(1) | Neglect (Scapegoated) |
| December 6, 2019 | Naval Air Station Pensacola shooting : Three people were killed and eight others were injured at a U.S. Navy base. The Saudi suspect was killed by police. | 4(8) | religious immigrant parents (→Cannot express true feelings) |
| December 1, 2019 | 2019 New Orleans shooting : Ten people were shot in a densely populated area with a heavy police presence at a time when tens of thousands of tourists were downtown for the Bayou Classic Football Game. | 0(10) | There was a feud before the game (→Neglect due to single-mother house →Possibly gang-related) |
| November 17, 2019 | 2019 Fresno shooting : Ten people were shot, four fatally, at a football party. | 4(6) | Gang →Neglect due to single-mother house |

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------|--|
| November 14, 2019 | Saugus High School shooting : Two people were killed and three others were injured at Saugus High School . The gunman then eventually committed suicide. | 3(3) | Cannot enter into peer circle (→ Neglect at home) |
| October 31, 2019 | Orinda Halloween Shooting : An overnight block party attended by over 100 people ended with five people killed and four more wounded by gunfire. | 5(4) | Gang (→Neglect due to single-mother house) |
| August 31, 2019 | 2019 West Texas shooting : Seven people were killed and 25 others were injured on the Interstate 20 . The suspect was killed after a shoot-out with police. | 8(25) | Fired (→Neglected person who worked quietly and could not find a new job) |
| August 4, 2019 | 2019 Dayton shooting : Nine people were killed and 27 were injured outside of a bar. The perpetrator was killed by the police. | 10(27) | Singing about sexual violence/misogyny/used cocaine/alcohol/Xanax (→Cannot express) |
| August 3, 2019 | 2019 El Paso shooting : A gunman killed 22 people and injured 24 others at a Walmart . The attack was a hate crime targeting Hispanic immigrants. The gunman was arrested. | 22(24) | Against Hispanic invasion (→Cannot express true self/Possible imprint by parents) |
| July 28, 2019 | Gilroy Garlic Festival shooting : A gunman killed three people, including one six-year-old boy, attending Gilroy's Annual Garlic Festival; 12 more people were injured. The shooter killed himself. | 4(15) | Conflicting ideologies, difficult to pinpoint their motivations White supremacist (→ Cannot express) |
| May 31, 2019 | Virginia Beach shooting : A gunman killed 12 people and injured five others at a municipal building. The gunman died at the scene. | 13(5) | Threatened with disciplinary action →resigned (→Neglected person overreacted) |
| May 7, 2019 | STEM School Highlands Ranch shooting : two shooters targeted separate locations and killed one student and injured eight more before being arrested. | 1(8) | Two suspects → transgendered boy + not being accepted by peers) used cocaine (→ Cannot express) |
| April 30, 2019 | 2019 UNCC shooting : Six people were shot, two fatally, on the last day of classes at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte . The student gunman was taken into custody after he ran away. | 2(4) | Autistic and socially reserved → devastated by M's death, who was an assistant teacher (→overprotected) |
| April 27, 2019 | Poway synagogue shooting : One person was killed and at least three were wounded by a shooter at the Chabad of Poway Synagogue . | 1(3) | antisemitic and racist (→Cannot express) |
| February 15, 2019 | Aurora, Illinois, shooting : A 45-year-old man opened fire at a Henry Pratt Company plant, and killed five people and injured six others. He was a former worker at the plant and he was killed in a shootout with police. | 6(6) | Fired (→Neglected type who worked quietly and could not find a new job) |
| January 26, 2019 | January 2019 Louisiana shootings : A 21-year-old man killed five people, including his parents, in two parishes in Louisiana. | 5(0) | schizophrenic →Cannot express (→Stressful family environment) |

(Adapted from Wikipedia—List of Mass Shootings in the United States https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_mass_shootings_in_the_United_States)

Note 1. Cases of bank robbery and police car chases were removed. **2.** The autistic case was placed in the *Neglect* group.

IV. ANALYSIS OF RECENT INCREASE OF MASS SHOOTINGS

The summary of the above information is as follows:

Targets of their revenge

{family, Navy base, football game, football watch party, high school, block party, Interstate, outside of a bar, Walmart, local festival, municipal building, school, university, synagogue, company, parish (with parents)}

Possible causes

- Neglect (9)
- Dogmatic (7) —{family religion, misogyny, against Hispanic, white supremacy, trans-gendered, schizophrenia (transgender and schizophrenia are the signs of being under pressure)}

Seeing these recent results, it seems like mass shootings can happen literally anywhere a certain number of people gather. Those who did not receive enough love during childhood can readily snap when certain stressors happen after years of conflictual lives, mainly among [Type 1](#) [Type 2](#) [Type 3](#). The other types are those whose ego developments were obstructed by a certain parental demand or manipulation, mainly [Type 6](#). This type is also as fragile as the clearly neglected types are, although they cannot often be distinguished, ostensibly mingling among general people.

Why are these mass shooters mass-produced among American families? It follows that there must be more families in which sufficient communication between parents and children is missing in the U.S., either in a neglectful or a demanding/manipulative way. Because of that, children cannot develop a healthy ego, which is necessary to live a healthy social life with proper resilience. Especially, a society whose national leader is highly volatile (as of 2019 and 2020) can produce more people like him, as Tarde indicates [44].

Be it neglect or imposition/manipulation, they could block children's natural emotional growth, by not respecting what children are truly *feeling*. *Imposition* could more easily happen in the society, where what is right is pressed and taught to be recognized in a top-down manner without waiting for the right timing of child's natural awareness in a bottom-up manner. This might more often be the case with certain religious teachings including Christianity. This is promoted by hyper-capitalistic competitions and the country's quite unique history of expansions by force. *Neglect* means family members are not caring for other members. This could be due to excessive individualism, which deeply permeates American society as a by-product of capitalism. Capitalism can run only by promoting individual interests as much as possible [45]. The U.S. is no doubt the most advanced capitalistic country in the world. Also, neglect during infancy can happen more easily in the U.S. due to the separation of babies and parents during sleep and the tendency to discourage primitive postnatal and breast-feeding [46].

V. CONCLUSION

Why are so many mass shootings happening everywhere in the U.S. today? It seems that, as with the case of environmental destruction, in a society where aggressive factors such as militarism, Christianity, capitalism, the frontier spirit, and like are deeply ingrained, the destruction of *Human Nature* can happen more easily. The volatile national leader plus the uncontrolled availability of guns can readily lead to the actual use of such weapons as solutions. Especially those raised either by neglect or imposition/manipulation during infancy, who as a result steadily stack up daily stresses/frustrations inside for years, are highly susceptible to later social frictions in life. Under such an atmosphere, one decisive stressor that completely cuts off ties between them and the society can push them to cross the lethal line. Just one incident of gun violence also could easily start the domino effect on these subjects. The only way to stop this current mass-shooting trend in the U.S. is 1) ensure that ample two-way communication between parents and children in each family should start from early infancy, never abandon any family member, and respect/accept what children have to say, understanding that childrearing is to prepare them to live independently in society in the future. 2) The national leader must become the *role model* for all children in the U.S. and the whole world, one who listens to others and solves problems in a peaceful, logical manner. In the U.S. society, where guns are so easily available and cannot be fully controlled, all we can do is to raise children to have unshakable empathy, respecting the *Inner Nature* of each child. To do this, we must be ready to put justice before the economy and enforce this all the way without exception. The role model with solid resolution for the execution of justice and to accept the children's final decisions in the end. For they are the ones who will judge our future.

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